

**HEALTH AND WELLNESS****OVERVIEW**

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The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Health Sector continues to advance and promote the First Nations Health Transformation Agenda (FNHTA). The FNHTA sets out 85 recommendations to federal, provincial and territorial governments. These cover a wide range of policy areas all aimed at stabilizing profoundly underfunded health programs, and increasing self-determination of First Nations health in keeping with inherent, Treaty and international rights.

As part of its' efforts to advance the regional health transformation initiatives, the AFN will be presenting at an upcoming federal/provincial/territorial Health Ministers' Meeting (HMM) in late June 2018. The AFN, along with our Inuit and Métis colleagues, will present on key priority areas on health in order to seek firm commitments to address these priorities. Specifically, the AFN will be seeking commitment on mental wellness and Jordan's Principle implementation. For too long, the provinces/territories have denied their responsibility for ensuring access to services for First Nations. The HMM is an

important opportunity to remind all jurisdictions that their Canada Health Transfer dollars include First Nations populations and that they continue to hold a responsibility to ensure First Nations have timely, equitable and culturally-safe care within provincial/territorial systems.

Other areas of work underway to support the implementation of the FNHTA includes, but is not limited to:

- Exploratory work on federal health legislation.
- Advancing the First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework.
- Continued work on the AFN-First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Joint Review.
- Promoting the AFN Health Partnerships Guide.
- The development of a new AFN Health Sector Strategic Plan.
- Launching the AFN Opioid Strategy.

**UPDATE**

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At the December 2017, Special Chiefs Assembly, the AFN received a mandate from the Chiefs in Assembly (Resolution 69/2017, *Exploring a Legislative Base for First Nations Health*) to explore the concept of federal

health legislation and develop tools to support First Nations in their own deliberations about the potential for legislation. Proposed areas of inquiry include developing basic myth busting about legislation, a risk/benefit analysis, and a

discussion around the relationship between Treaty rights and legislation. The AFN has secured legal experts to assist in this work and will develop opportunities for First Nations to inform the development of the products. In addition, the AFN is seeking to host a dialogue session on exploring health legislation at the upcoming AFN Annual General Assembly.

Budget 2018 included significant new investments in Indigenous health in the order of \$1.5 billion over five years starting in 2018–19, and \$149 million per year ongoing. Notable

areas of investment include new dollars for Health Transformation (\$235 million), a critical extension of the Indian Residential School Resolution Health Support Program (\$248.6 million/3 years) and investments in addictions treatment centres and staff (\$200 million/5 years). Notably, Budget 2018 signaled that a number of FNIHB programs will be shifted into A-based funding including clinical client care, accreditation, eHealth infrastructure, and the addictions treatment funding. The AFN will continue to seek details on budget implementation including regional allocations.

## NEXT STEPS

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A number of key next steps in advancing the AFN health agenda include:

- Finalizing and advancing the AFN-FNIHB shared workplan to support health transformation.
- Finalizing the workplan to respond to Resolution 69/2017, *Exploring a Legislative Base for First Nations Health*, and securing outside experts to inform this work.
- Launching the *First Nations Health Priorities to Reducing Problematic Opioid Use – Discussion Document: A First Nations Specific Opioid Strategy*.
- In order to conclude the AFN-FNIHB NIHB Joint Review, the AFN will convene meetings of the National Navigators Network, the Joint Review Steering Technical Working Group and Implementation Table throughout 2018. These meetings will focus on finalizing the reviews and approvals of the remaining benefit areas that will inform the next piece of work to bring transformative changes in benefit delivery and governance.
- An update on the Joint Review Steering Committee and next steps will be provided at the SCA in in December 2018.